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EMERGENCY

MEASURES

NEWS

The Newsletter of Emergency Measures Ontario Volume 1, No. 2 Spring 1995

Exercise Pickering 1995 — An Overview

BY DOUG HARRISON, EXERCISE DIRECTOR

Exercise Pickering '95 was held on February 22 and 23, in Durham Region and Metropolitan Toronto. The exercise — the largest conducted by EMO in recent years — was based on a simulated loss of coolant accident at the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station, and the effect on off-site public safety. Exercise events were written to unfold over a two-day time period.

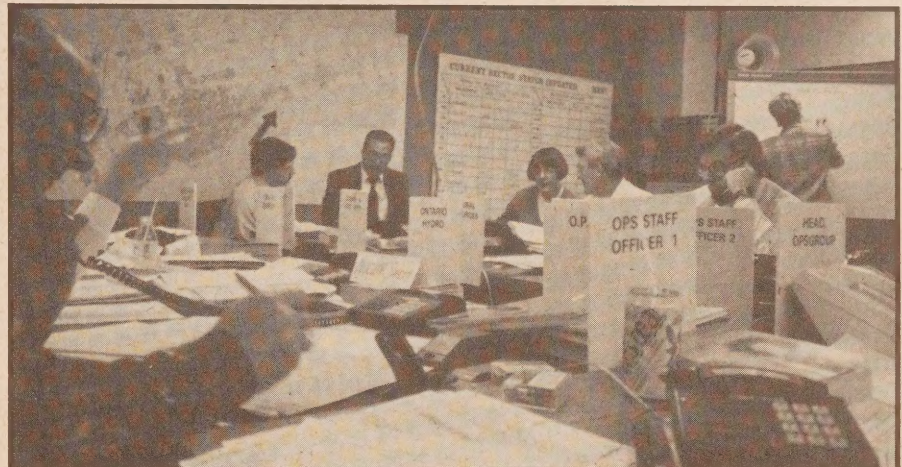
The focus of the exercise was on:

- ☒ notification and alerting
- ☒ telecommunications
- ☒ accident assessment
- ☒ the decision-making process
- ☒ providing accurate and timely information and direction to the public
- ☒ protective actions
- ☒ traffic control, and
- ☒ emergency worker safety.

The exercise was designed to test a number of groups in their ability to manage an off-site emergency, in accordance with the Provincial Nuclear Emergency Plan.

During the exercise, the Province operated the:

- ☒ Provincial Operations Centre (POC)



Provincial Operations Centre (POC) staff hard at work during "Exercise Pickering '95."

- ☒ Joint Information Centre (JIC)
 - ☒ Joint Traffic Control Centre
 - ☒ Technical Group
 - ☒ Ingestion Monitoring Control Group
 - ☒ various ministry action groups.
- (More detailed accounts of JIC and Technical Group activities are featured on pages 4 & 5.)

Durham Region set up and tested its:

- ☒ Regional Operations Centre
- ☒ Pickering and Ajax Municipal Operations Centres
- ☒ two Reception Centres
- ☒ two Evacuee Centres, and
- ☒ an Exposure Control Centre for emergency workers.

Metropolitan Toronto also activated its Operations Centre.

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From the Director's Desk

BY JIM ELLARD

Spring has arrived, and with it, the expected threat of floods and forest fires which annually make life miserable for many

Ontarians, particularly Northern residents.

If nature has not already forced you to do so, now would be a good time to haul out your emergency plan and give it a good spring cleaning.

Throw out debris such as out-of-date names, telephone numbers and other details which no longer apply. Replace with fresh, new information.

While you are at it, carefully review the assignment of duties and responsibilities to make sure they still apply.

Has your organization changed? Has someone that you depend upon moved or retired? Will it all come together at that critical time when an

emergency has been declared? Take the time now to review your plan, and guard against any unpleasant surprises.

Once you have your plan all spiffed-up, don't forget to arrange an exercise to remind everyone that they have a role to play. Refresh their memories about notification and response procedures, and test communication arrangements.

Finally, don't forget to contact EMO if you need assistance with any of these activities. Remember, your next emergency may be just around the corner — it pays to plan and prepare!

Until next time...

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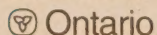
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Provincial Emergency Plan Developed for Ontario

After three years of planning, writing and re-writing, Ontario now has a Provincial Emergency Plan (PEP). In March, the ten ministries assigned special responsibility for emergency situations all approved the plan.

The PEP was developed in consultation with these ministries through the Emergency Preparedness Coordinating Committee (EPCC).

The plan sets out the role the province plays in preparing and responding to major emergencies in Ontario. This encompasses everything from daily operational procedures, to the deployment of provincial response resources and the declaration of

provincial emergencies. The PEP outlines how the provincial operations centre will interact with ministry action groups, the joint information centre, municipal emergency authorities and the federal government.

Other important elements which are included as annexes to the PEP include the provincial counter-terrorism plan (currently in draft format), and the provincial emergency information plan.

One crucial component of the PEP, is the requirement for ministry-specific emergency plans which address the special responsibility areas. Each of the 10 ministries are required to complete a plan by the end of 1995.

Spreading the Safety Message

How Citizens' Groups Contribute to Safety and Emergency Preparedness in Ontario

BY ELAINE SIMPSON

Safety has always been something of a preoccupation for May Toth, co-chair of the Hamilton-Wentworth Public Education Emergency Preparedness (PEEP) Citizens Committee.

As a child living in Scotland near the end of WW II, Toth was already very aware of safety issues.

"It was my duty to carry my gas mask, my school bag and drink my milk!" she laughs. "Even when we were told it wasn't necessary to carry our gas masks with us, I wouldn't be parted from mine! In my family, being taught about safety just seemed like a normal part of growing up."

Perhaps because of her early introduction to the importance of being prepared, Toth has been involved with emergency planning and preparedness for much of her adult life. She began a career in nursing and midwifery at the age of 17, even working for a time at the Birmingham Accidents Hospital, an institution dedicated to handling emergencies in the industrial area of the British Midlands.

Coming to Canada in the early 1960s, Toth continued working in the health care field, something she still does to this day. "Like emergency planning and preparedness," she notes, "a lot of what you do in health care is a matter of anticipating problems, or worst-case scenarios, and deciding how to best plan for and manage them."

With Toth as one of its founding members, the Public Education Emergency Preparedness (PEEP) Citizens Committee, began meeting in 1979 as a concern of the health and safety

committee of the Hamilton & District Council of Women. The group gradually evolved into a separate committee, and the name subsequently changed to its present form in 1991. The committee's purpose is to educate residents in the Hamilton-Wentworth region about emergency preparedness, monitor the Regional Emergency Response Plan and promote emergency preparedness and education practices.

The goal and objectives of the PEEP Citizens Committee mirror those of municipal and provincial emergency measures groups. The PEEP group works closely with the emergency planner for the Hamilton-Wentworth region, Gary Ostofi, and in fact, Ostofi is Toth's co-chair on the committee.

The PEEP committee gets out its message through public speaking, setting up booths at local events, and through publicity in area newspapers. Toth's group also monitors the actions of the different levels of government regarding safety issues,



PEEP uses this logo on the cover of their safety pamphlet.

makes resolutions and, either with the Council of Women or independently, lobby to improve areas they've identified as needing change.

One of these areas is the issue of plant and dump abandonment, something which is especially topical in the Hamilton area. In September of 1993, an emergency was declared when it was found that children had gained access to an abandoned industrial lab, and been exposed to mercury and other chemicals. Toth points out that there are many abandoned plants, warehouses and dump sites throughout Ontario, which should be noted in local community emergency plans. "This is the current bee I have in my bonnet," she says, "and an issue my group will be working on in future."

Increasing community involvement in emergency public education has become an integral part of its delivery. Groups like the PEEP Citizens Committee help to bridge the gap between government and the general public. Any initiatives that increase the public's involvement in preparing for emergencies, consequently, increases the level of safety in the province.

The Technical Group

The Meeting of Scientific Minds

BY AADU PILT

"H

ello...this is Aadu Pilt calling from Emergency Measures Ontario...may I speak with Theo

Kempe please...I have an emergency exercise message...there's been a Category 2 at Pickering...could you report to the Provincial Operations Centre on Harbour Street...yes, as soon as possible."

That's how members of the Technical Group were notified of a simulated accident at Pickering's nuclear station on the morning of February 23, 1995.

Within an hour and a half, over 20 experts have sped to 90 Harbour Street in downtown Toronto, and assembled in computer-equipped rooms to provide scientific data and advice needed to protect the public. The group is comprised of specialists in reactor systems, meteorology, radiation protection, health and agriculture, and represents four

provincial ministries, Ontario Hydro, Atomic Energy of Canada and the Atomic Energy Control Board. The group's head, professor Ken McNeil, is among the first to arrive, and begins reviewing the latest data from Pickering to decide what his group should do first.

Questions from senior government officials come fast and furious. Is sheltering necessary? Which sectors should evacuate? How long will residents have to stay away from their homes. Are meteorological conditions suitable for a controlled, filtered release?

Data from Ontario Hydro, Environment Canada and other sources are

quickly input into computers. Anxious moments pass as partial differential equations are numerically solved. Finally, the results are displayed!

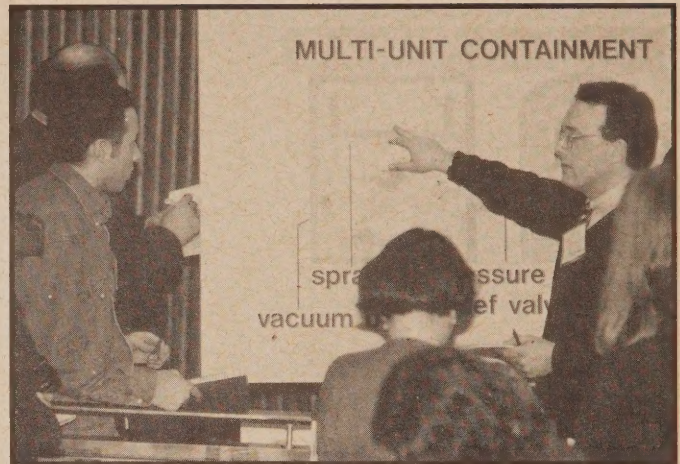
Meanwhile, the media is bombarding the Joint Information Centre with questions. Rumours

abound. "It's another Chernobyl," screams an anti-nuclear activist. "Everyone within 30 miles of Pickering will die!"

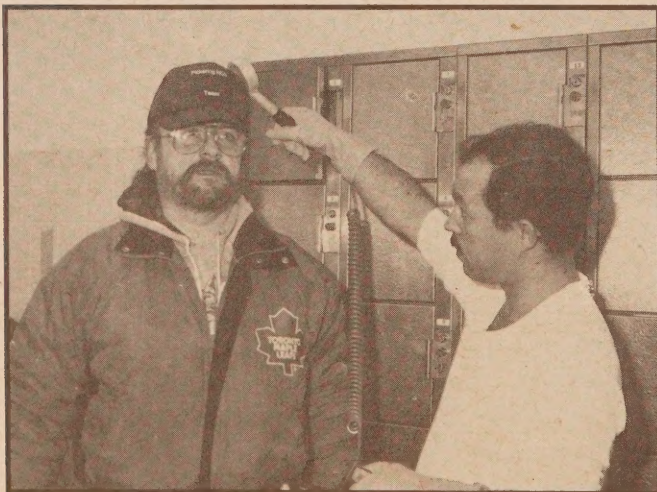
But, the calculations are far more reassuring. It's a bad accident, but no catastrophe is expected. Some people are advised to leave their homes temporarily to avoid the radioactive cloud; others need only stay indoors and close all doors and windows. When the release finally starts, local officials have ensured everyone is safe.

It was only an exercise. But the test is important, especially for the technical group. Even though they engage in frequent drills and tabletop exercises, there is nothing like a two-day, full-scale exercise to concentrate the mind.

It's up to the technical group specialists to make sure the right advice is given, and much work goes on behind the scenes before that advice hits the media. To evacuate or not...it's a big responsibility.



Media is given a technical briefing.



Emergency workers are tested for radiation.

Getting the Word Out

The Role of the JIC in Emergency Situations

BY ELAINE SIMPSON

An emergency has struck your community. Do you take steps to protect yourself? Who's in charge? You need information and you need it quickly. Where do you get it from?

Introducing the Joint Information Centre or JIC.

The idea of the JIC is simple: if people receive coordinated, accurate and timely information, then emergencies can be dealt with more quickly and effectively. Ensuring that information is passed along and understood is often difficult under normal circumstances. But during a large-scale emergency, involving dozens of response organizations and hundreds of people, this task can become enormous.

In February, the JIC concept was put to the test during the full-scale nuclear emergency exercise "Pickering '95." Staff from EMO, and the Communications Branch of the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services, along with representatives from Ontario Hydro and the Pickering station, took part in the exercise. Employees from a number of other Ontario ministries, Durham region and Metro Toronto also helped staff the JIC. The main objective of the exercise and the training drills leading up to it, was to increase JIC members' understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

JIC staff work together to ensure that information on the emergency

gets out quickly and efficiently. Each member of the JIC has a pre-determined role to play, be it gathering information from operations centres, writing news releases or speaking to reporters.

JIC staff do not issue emergency orders. This information, known as public action directives (PADs), is sent to designated media outlets by provincial officials working at the provincial operations centre.

The JIC passes on other news to the media, such as updates on how the emergency is being dealt with. The JIC works with the media and, in effect, makes it part of the JIC team. Reporters come to the JIC to be briefed, and relay news to the general public.

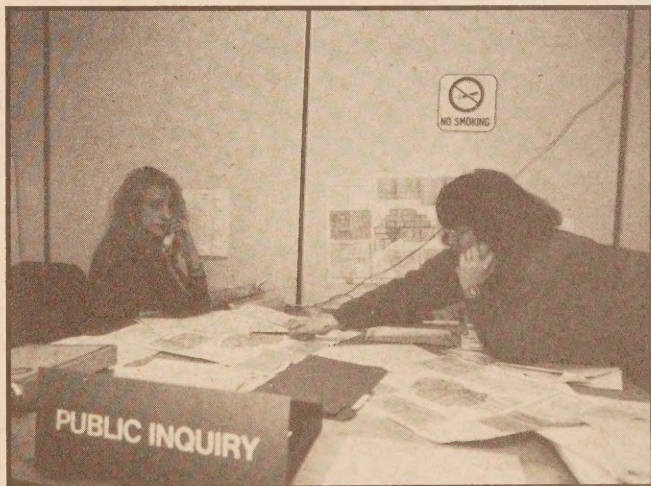
The JIC portion of Exercise Pickering was an intensive operation. Over a two-day period, staff wrote and issued press releases, held media briefings and monitored



"Mock" media gather at the JIC.

the media to ensure that correct messages were being broadcast to the public.

At post-exercise debriefings, most participants agreed that taking part in the full-fledged JIC exercise was time well-spent. Training and exercises are ongoing, with another JIC session slated for the fall. This ensures staff continue to be well-versed in their JIC roles.



Public enquiry staff respond to questions.

Evacuation Update

BY MAUREEN GRIFFITHS

Evacuations are tough on everyone involved. Depending on the nature and scope of the emergency, the effects of an evacuation can even trigger the need to declare an emergency.

While the principles of evacuation planning are generally simple, a significant amount of planning and training is required. Some communities like the Town of Geraldton or the Moosonee Development Area Board have been host communities so often that their ability to care for evacuees is well-honed.

Not all communities in Ontario are as well prepared as Geraldton and Moosonee; there is still much work to be done in the evacuation planning field. However, progress is being made.

Northern Ontario Evacuation Centre Study

In 1994, Emergency Measures Ontario, with funding assistance from Emergency Preparedness Canada, hired a consultant to conduct the Northern Ontario Evacuation Centre Study. Organised in response to repeated evacuations of northern Ontario

communities due to forest fires and floods, the study examined locations in Ontario which would be suitable as evacuation centres during major emergencies. The two sample communities used in the study were the Town of Geraldton and the First Nation community of Eabametong (Fort Hope).



Without planning, evacuation centres can be chaotic in an emergency.

The study established a framework for further discussion and actions, emphasising the need for communities to review and prepare emergency plans. One of the study's recommendations emphasised the need for evacuee centres to be properly equipped to look after evacuees. As the Town of Geraldton has repeatedly acted as a receiving community, and requested assistance in equipping its evacuee centres, some surplus beds, mattresses and blankets that had recently become available, were shipped to the town.

Guidelines for the Operation of Evacuation Centres

In other areas of evacuation planning, Emergency Preparedness

Canada recently conducted a study to establish guidelines for the operation of evacuation centres. The document will soon be available to communities throughout Canada and other countries as a reference guide on how to set up and operate an evacuee centre.

Guidance on evacuee centre space allocation, the number of bathroom facilities that should be available, security, internal addressing, daily schedules and the management of the centre are just some of the topics covered in the study. This document will also provide operational checklists that can be used during an emergency.

Community Evacuation Workshop

Emergency Measures Ontario is currently developing a special evacuation workshop for Ontario communities. It will address important planning and operational issues associated with physically moving people, setting up evacuee centres and public information, including how to warn the public and keep them informed. The workshop will also deal with the aftermath or recovery activities associated with evacuations. It is hoped that the workshop will be available to communities by the end of 1995.

Getting to Know You...

The season is upon us! Along with better weather, spring always brings a significant number of emergency measures-related events, and this year is no exception.

EMO staff travelled to London in early April to display at "Partners in Response 1995," staged by the area Amateur Radio Emergency Service. The event featured emergency response resources of the London region, with participants travelling from as far away as Niagara and Sarnia. London area MPP the Honourable Marion Boyd, Ontario's Attorney General, officially opened

the event, bringing best wishes from her colleague responsible for public safety, David Christopherson, Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services.

The second-annual event was open to the public for the first time. Highlights of the day included a demonstration of the "jaws of life" and other safety and emergency response enactments.

Approximately 45 groups displayed at "Partners in Response" and over 1,500 members of the public attended. Organizers were pleased with the turnout, and plans are already under way for a bigger and better display next year.

Other events that EMO staff will



The Honourable Marion Boyd stopped by the EMO booth at "Partners in Response '95."

display at the upcoming weeks include the World Conference on Disaster Management, June 20-23, 1995 in Hamilton, and the Quinte Area Health and Safety Fair, June 24, 1995 at Canadian Forces Base Trenton.

Hams Who Want to Help

BY KATHY KERR VA3KKD

Imagine the worst case scenario for your community during an emergency: All of your telephone lines go down and you have no means of communicating into, or out of, your operations centre. How will you manage this emergency?

Consider including Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) volunteers in your emergency plan. ARES volunteers are highly trained amateur radio operators who are ready and willing to assist in the provision of emergency telecommunication services.

The term "amateur" is misleading. These licensed radio operators (often

referred to as "hams"), are trained at establishing emergency telecommunications systems. This includes every-

**ARES IS A VALUABLE
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
RESOURCE THAT SHOULD
NOT BE OVERLOOKED IN
YOUR PLANNING PROCESS.**

thing from maintaining and equipping stations, to transmitting and receiving messages from other remote locations. Information can be transmitted verbally, in Morse code, or digitally us-

ing packet radio. In Ontario alone, there are close to 10,000 licensed amateur radio operators.

ARES is a valuable telecommunications resource that should not be overlooked in your planning process. ARES members are enthusiastic volunteers who are interested in serving their community. These people have a wide variety of equipment that may address the telecommunications challenges facing your community.

For more information on Amateur Radio Emergency Services, please contact Pierre Mainville, VA3PM, Radio Amateurs of Canada, Section Emergency Coordinator (Ontario), at (905) 453-6644.

The Back Page

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

Ontario's first-ever critical incident stress management (CISM) coordinator, Murray Firth (see *Emergency Measures News*, Fall 1994) will be leaving the program as of May 31.

Under Murray's guidance, the CISM program has grown significantly throughout the province. Many communities now have CISM teams in place or know how to access one in a neighbouring area when the need arises. EMO would like to express its thanks to Murray for doing such an excellent job with the program, and wishes him well in his new endeavours.

Two New CEMAs Join EMO

April saw the addition of two new community emergency measures advisers (CEMAs) at either end of the province.

Steve Beatty is the first CEMA to serve southwestern Ontario exclusively, and will be based out of London. Gary Kerton will take over the Thunder Bay CEMA position, vacant since last fall, to serve the northwestern portion of the province. A warm welcome is extended to these newest members of the EMO team.

Steve and Gary join other area CEMAs Wayne Bennett (Sudbury) and Randy Reid (Kingston) (see *Emergency Measures News*, Fall 1994), in their work to help Ontario communities plan and prepare for emergencies.

Steve will be based out of EMO's Toronto office until the end of June. Communities within the London area may contact him in Toronto at (416) 314-3723. Those in the Thunder Bay region can reach Gary at (807) 473-3191.

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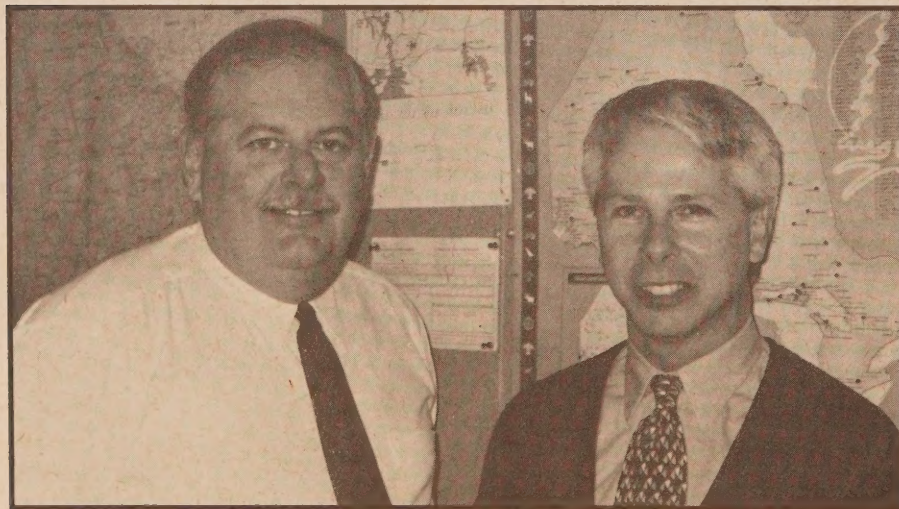
Many volunteer organizations, like the Canadian Red Cross, participated in the exercise as well.

Finally, Ontario Hydro played a very prominent role, offering input into the design of the exercise, setting up the Ontario Hydro Operations Centre and participating on many of the control groups.

The various participant groups all received, synthesized, monitored and responded to information about the mock emergency. Decisions made by emergency management officials were subject to many considerations — technical, scientific, operational and even political. However the ultimate consideration in any emergency situation, be it simulated or the real thing, is the safety of the public.

At the close of the two days, Dr. Jim Young, Assistant Deputy Minister of Public Safety, and provincial spokesperson during the exercise, noted "Many valuable lessons have been learned. There are things which need to be improved, but we have demonstrated that the provincial nuclear emergency plan can be effectively implemented."

While all reports are not yet in, overall, Exercise Pickering '95 was seen as a success on several levels. What was learned was not only relevant, but particularly timely, as work begins this year to revise the Provincial Nuclear Emergency Plan.



New CEMAs Steve Beatty and Gary Kerton